

## SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL;

Austin, Texas, January 5, 1940.

The City Council convened in special session, in the Council Room at the Municipal Building, on Friday, January 5, 1940, at 2:30 P. M., with Mayor Tom Miller presiding. Roll call showed the following members present: Councilmen Alford, Bartholomew, Gillis, Mayor Miller, and Councilman Wolf; absent, none.

A large delegation of citizens was also present.

The Mayor stated that the meeting was called for the purpose of a public hearing on the proposed route for a boulevard down Shoal Creek and Ruiz Street, to be built by the City of Austin in order to relieve traffic congestion around the State University; and the construction of a bridge over the Colorado River at Fannin Street by the State Highway Department.

For the information of those present, the Mayor then gave a summary of the negotiations that the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce had had with the State Highway Department relative to the securing of a bridge over the Colorado River on the west side, and the prevention of a by-pass around Austin which the State Highway Department was contemplating, the result of such negotiations being the proposed site for the bridge and boulevard under consideration.

The meeting was then thrown open to discussion, and the following persons were heard, pro and con on the matter, substantially as follows:

Mr. Ed Clark, Attorney for Dr. James T. Paul Robison, Messrs. John H. Nash, Paul Bolton, and R. W. Byram, property owners in the Shoal Creek area, protested the proposed route for the boulevard on the grounds: that it would do irreparable injury to their property, that, for practical purposes, would destroy the enjoyment of Pease Park, that from an economic standpoint would cost the City more to buy the right of ways along Ruiz Street and the Shoal Creek area than to route the boulevard along the railroad in the western part of the city or to continue the highway down Congress Avenue and the City build the bridge, that traffic hazard would be increased in the House Park and the Pease and the High School areas, and that no harm would be done the business interests of the City for the proposed highway to by-pass the City, citing the City of Houston in support of this last contention. He further declared that the people affected had not had due notice of the proposed route.

In reply to Mr. Clark's statements, Dr. Goodall Wooten, past president of the Chamber of Commerce, told the meeting that in 1935 the State Highway Department attempted to by-pass the City on both sides and the Chamber of Commerce, in an attempt to prevent this, gave notice to the business men and citizens of Austin to attend a meeting to be held at the State Highway Department, and that in response to this notice only eight citizens appeared; that the matter was there thrashed out pro and con, and, as a compromise, the Chamber of Commerce accepted the Shoal Creek route, not because they wanted it but because it was the best that they could do.

Mr. B. J. Rupert, a resident of South Austin, stated that as President of the South Austin Civic Club he worked in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce on the highway plan mentioned by Dr. Wooten and that he knew the matter had received a great deal of publicity; and he further stated that the people of the South Side favor the bridge at the proposed site, and that another bridge for the east side would come later.

Mr. M. H. Crockett submitted a written statement at length, showing his reasons for favoring the location of the bridge at the designated site on the west side, declaring that it was the next best thing to having the Congress Avenue Bridge widened, which the State Highway Department was not in favor of.

Mrs. J. W. McClendon opposed the proposition, declaring that she owns two blocks on Shoal Creek Boulevard and does not wish to see the same commercialized.

Dr. Frederick W. Eby, whose residence overlooks the proposed boulevard, opposed the proposition on the grounds: that it would increase the hazard for the traffic crossing Shoal Creek from the northwestern section of the City, that this area is needed for a park for University of Texas students, and that to put a commercial line there would destroy the finest and most beautiful driveway in the City, declaring that Shoal Creek Boulevard is to the City of Austin what beautiful Rock Creek Boulevard is to the City of Washington, D. C.

Judge John W. Hornsby gave a history of the building of the Congress Avenue Bridge by the Commissioners Court during his tenure of office as County Judge, declaring that there never had been any question about its being the property of the County of Travis.

Mr. Fred Adams stated that when he came to the meeting he was undecided whether he favored or opposed the proposed route, that he did know, however, that the State Highway Department wanted a by-pass route and only favored this route as a compromise with the City of Austin; but that, it having been shown to him since coming to the meeting that the proposed alternative route along the railroad and other routes were not feasible, he wished to withdraw any objections he may have had to the proposed route in question.

Dr. D. K. Brace also stated that he did not know whether he favored or opposed the route in question, but declared that whatever is done there should be done with the guarantee that it will be a beauty spot and not a traffic hazard. He asked that the City Council go on record as favoring a charter amendment prohibiting any commercialization of Shoal Creek Boulevard.

Mrs. Jas. R. Hamilton stated that as a property owner along the proposed route, she wanted to assure the City Council of her full cooperation in the matter, whether the same will be advantageous to her interests or not.

Mr. W. T. Caswell, appearing individually and not as an official of the Park Board, declared in favor of the proposed route.

Mr. A. S. Hull, representing various organizations, declared that another bridge across the Colorado River was imperative, and plead for cooperation in securing the half million dollar structure under consideration, without increased taxation, rather than the building of same by the City of Austin to be paid for by the taxpayers.

Mr. C. A. Schutze declared that another bridge over the Colorado River was the most urgent need of the City, that the proposed route down Shoal Creek Boulevard would alleviate traffic congestion by giving another outlet for traffic from Bryker Woods and other additions to the north, that it had been shown that the proposed alternate route down the railroad was not feasible from an economic standpoint, that public sentiment would always prevent any commercialization of the Shoal Creek valley and the beautification of same from 12th to 29th Streets over the proposed route would give the City of Austin one of the greatest assets in the United States, and that he, with others, would favor a charter amendment to the effect that Shoal Creek could never be commercialized.

Dr. Geo. W. Stocking, whose residence also overlooks Shoal Creek Boulevard, declared that the main issue was the building of a bridge over the Colorado River, that he was not convinced that a change in the route would jeopardize this project, and that he believed a mistake had been made in the matter, expressing the hope that the City Council had not so solidified its views that it would not be willing to give reconsideration to the question.

Mrs. Geo. W. Stocking opposed the proposed route on the ground that it would interfere with the use of the park by the children of the City, and asked that another street be selected where the hazard would not be so great.

Mr. James E. Allen, who lives at 1000 West 33rd Street, stated that the proposed route would take in most of his little home, which was doubly dear to his wife and him because their children were all born there and one son was burned to death trying to save it, but that he had rather give this

little home than see Austin by-passed - for the taking of business out of Austin means a loss of business to the working man - and, further, that he would not stand in the way of progress.

Mr. Paul H. Pfeifer stated that another bridge over the Colorado River is badly needed to relieve local traffic, and pointed out that the greatest trend in the City's growth is to the north and west.

Mr. John H. Nash stated that he wanted the bridge, but did not want to see Shoal Creek Boulevard commercialized.

Mr. Ed Clark stated further that, it having been shown that the route proposed along the Missouri Pacific Railroad in west Austin was not feasible, he wished to suggest that the bridge be built at East Avenue instead, as it would relieve local traffic more than would a bridge at Barton Springs crossing, and that a by-pass down East Avenue would harm business very little.

The City Manager advised the meeting that, in regard to the East Avenue route, if a change were made now the Highway Department would cancel the appropriation, which it has taken five years to get, and that it would probably take another five years to secure one for East Avenue.

Mayor Miller stated to the meeting that it was the intention of the present City Council to preserve intact the residential character of Shoal Creek Boulevard, and suggested that such a provision might be incorporated in an amendment to the City Charter, thereby assuring its permanency.

Councilman Bartholomew thanked the large crowd present for their interest in the matter by coming to the meeting, and went on record as promising his best efforts as Councilman to making the proposed boulevard more beautiful than it is today. He stated that he was not sold on this route either, but that, apparently, it was the best that could be found, and declared that he would not sit in the Council and cast his vote to put a by-pass around Austin, either east or west, citing as an example of what such a by-pass would do for business here, Highway No. 66, which by-passes Austin, carrying trucks from the Valley to points north.

Councilman Gillis went on record as favoring the proposed route because it will be used by local traffic far more than by out-of-town traffic.

A written communication from Howard W. McKean, property owner at the southwest corner of Sixth and Fannin Streets, stating that he would not oppose the proposed route, was received and filed.

The meeting then recessed at 6:00 P. M.

Approved: Tom Miller  
Mayor

Attest:

Hallie McKean  
City Clerk.